

Kaunihera | Council

Ngā Tāpiritanga – Pūrongo | Attachments – Reports ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER

Notice is hereby given that an ordinary meeting of Matamata-Piako District Council will be held on:

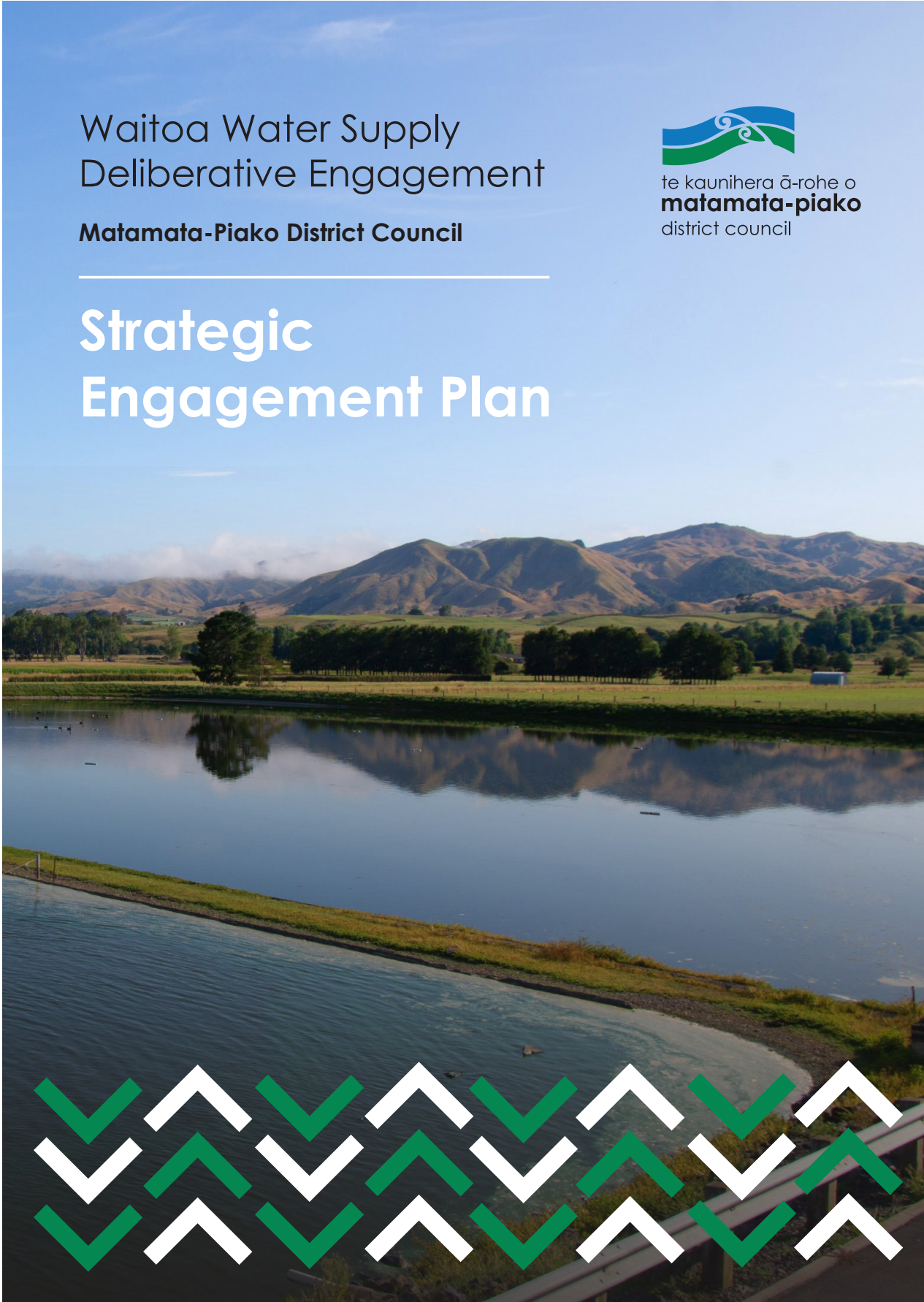
Ko te rā | Date: Wednesday 27 August 2025

Wā | Time: 9:00

Meeting Room: Council Chambers

**Wāhi | Venue: 35 Kenrick Street
TE AROHA**

TAKE ITEM	NGĀ IHINGA TABLE OF CONTENTS	WHĀRANGI PAGE
7.2	Waitoa Water Engagement	
A.	Waitoa Water - Matamata-Piako District Council - SEP v8	3
7.4	Approval of Staff submissions on RMA Reform Packages 1 - 4	
A.	MPDC - Submission to RMA Reform Package 1 and 2 - 2025	23
B.	MPDC - Submission to NPS-FM & NES-F Package 3 - 2025	103
C.	MPDC - Submission to RMA Reform Package 4 - 2025	115



Waitoa Water Supply Deliberative Engagement

Matamata-Piako District Council



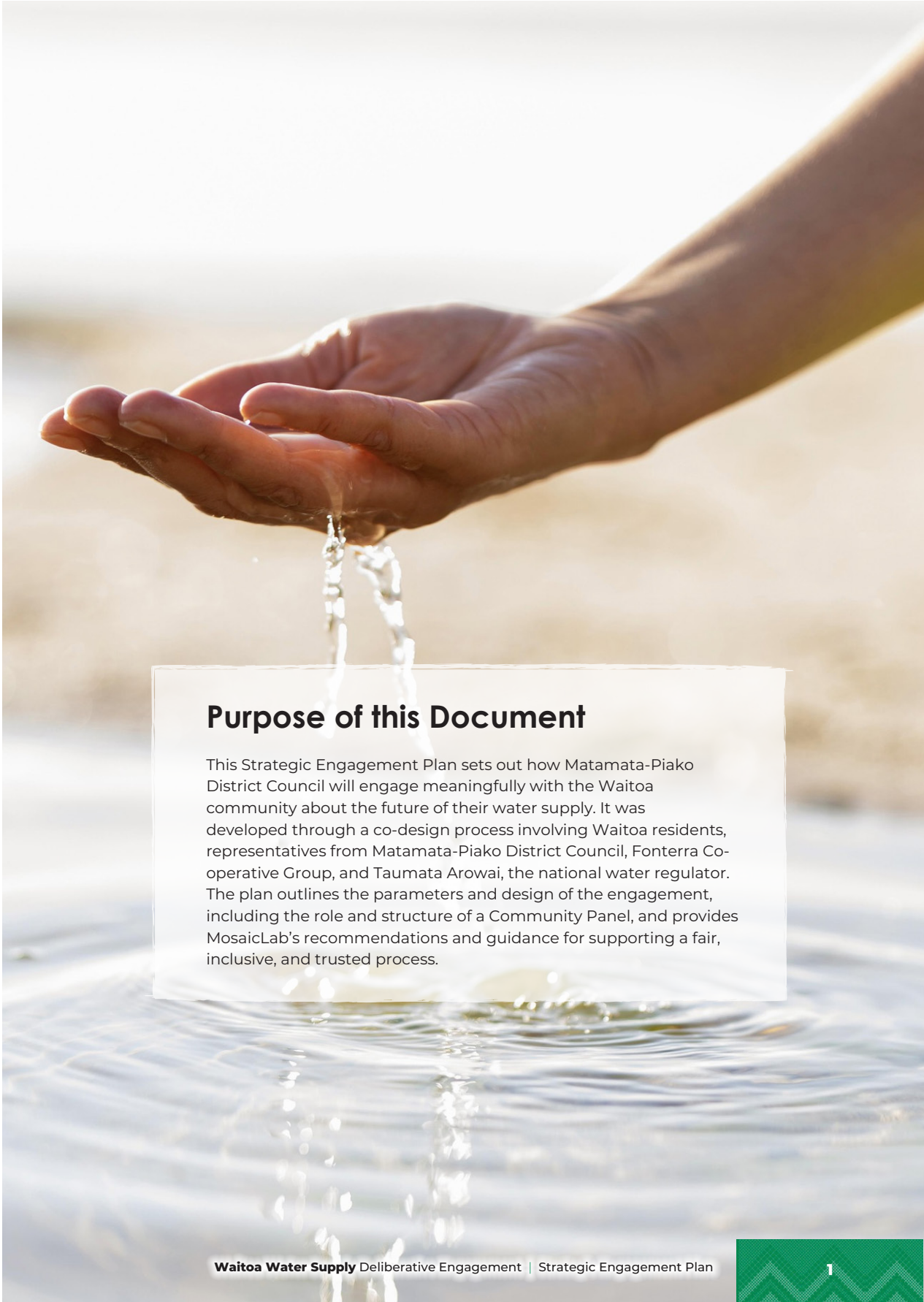
te kaunihera ā-rohe o
matamata-piako
district council

Strategic Engagement Plan



Contents

Purpose of this Document	1
1. Foundations for the Engagement	2
1.1 Context	2
1.2 Remit	3
1.3 Objectives	3
1.4 Scope (Negotiables and Non-Negotiables)	4
2. Engagement design	5
2.1 Process Map	5
2.2 Level of Community Influence and Council Promises	7
2.3 Engagement Roadmap	8
2.4 Community Panel Journey	9
3. Preparing for a Community Panel	10
3.1 What is a Community Panel?	10
3.2 Recruitment Approach	12
3.3 Background Information Document	14
3.4 Water Supply Considerations	15



Purpose of this Document

This Strategic Engagement Plan sets out how Matamata-Piako District Council will engage meaningfully with the Waitoa community about the future of their water supply. It was developed through a co-design process involving Waitoa residents, representatives from Matamata-Piako District Council, Fonterra Co-operative Group, and Taumata Arowai, the national water regulator. The plan outlines the parameters and design of the engagement, including the role and structure of a Community Panel, and provides MosaicLab's recommendations and guidance for supporting a fair, inclusive, and trusted process.

1. Foundations for the Engagement

1.1 Context

The way water is supplied to Waitoa is changing. For many years, Fonterra Cooperative Group has provided water to homes in the area. However, given the requirements of the Water Services Act 2021, Fonterra has decided to no longer continue in this role.

This change means the Waitoa community must now consider alternatives for how water will be supplied in the future. There are two main options:

- ◆ Self-supply, where individual households or groups manage their own water systems
- ◆ Council supply, where Waitoa connects to the Council's existing water network

But this isn't just about pipes and systems – it's about what matters to the people of Waitoa. People are wondering whether the water will be safe and reliable, how much it will cost, who will manage the water, how much say locals will have, and whether different options are fair for different types of residents – homeowners, renters, large property owners, and others. It's a complex issue that's been discussed in the community for some time, with a range of views and experiences to consider.

That's why Matamata-Piako District Council (MPDC) is working with the community to explore what comes next. They're supporting a multi-step process that makes space for informed and inclusive community discussion to guide this important decision. The process includes hearing from a broad range of community voices and bringing together a representative Community Panel to take a deeper look at the issues. The Panel will weigh up the opportunities and challenges of each water supply option and make recommendations for decision-making. This will help ensure Council decisions for the new water supply take into account what the people of Waitoa think is important.



1.2 Remit

The way water is supplied to Waitoa is changing. It is time to look at different options and decide a new way to access water.

How can we make sure everyone in Waitoa has safe and resilient water for years to come?



1.3 Objectives

4.1. Rational objectives

(the outputs and tangible things)

Shared understanding of the issue

Community and Council gain a shared understanding of the water situation in Waitoa – what’s changed, what the options are, and what the risks and costs might be.

Community perspectives on water supply

Perspectives from the Waitoa community, the wider district, and the community panel, capturing what matters most to people when considering future water supply options.

A decision on the future of Waitoa water supply

A Council decision is reached, taking into account community perspectives, and is broadly understood and accepted by the Waitoa community and the broader Matamata-Piako District community.

Clarity of timing

A clear timeline for decision-making and implementation of the preferred water supply.

4.2. Experiential objectives

(the engagement experience)

Help people feel heard and valued

Make sure everyone feels they are heard and that their views have been taken seriously. That their voices have helped shape what happens next.

Enable inclusive and respectful conversations

Provide a welcoming and active space for diverse voices to speak, hear from others, and talk about different views in a respectful way.

Build community connection and trust

Strengthen relationships among residents and between the community and Council, so people leave feeling connected, engaged and accepting of the outcome.

1.4 Scope (Negotiables and Non-Negotiables)



Negotiables

Things that participants CAN influence

Which water option is the best fit for Waitoa

Provide recommendations on the future water supply to Council for final decision making.

What matters most when choosing a water option

Identify what's important and should guide the decision – such as water reliability, safety, costs, responsibilities, and property and lifestyle impacts.

What help the community might need

Shape advice on what kind of support Waitoa residents need to make the transition to a new water supply.



Non-negotiables

Things that participants CANNOT influence

Fonterra is stepping away from supplying water

Fonterra Cooperative Group has confirmed it will no longer supply water to Waitoa.

All water supply options must meet legal safety standards

National safety and quality standards are set by law and can't be changed through this process.

Not all ideas will be possible or allowed

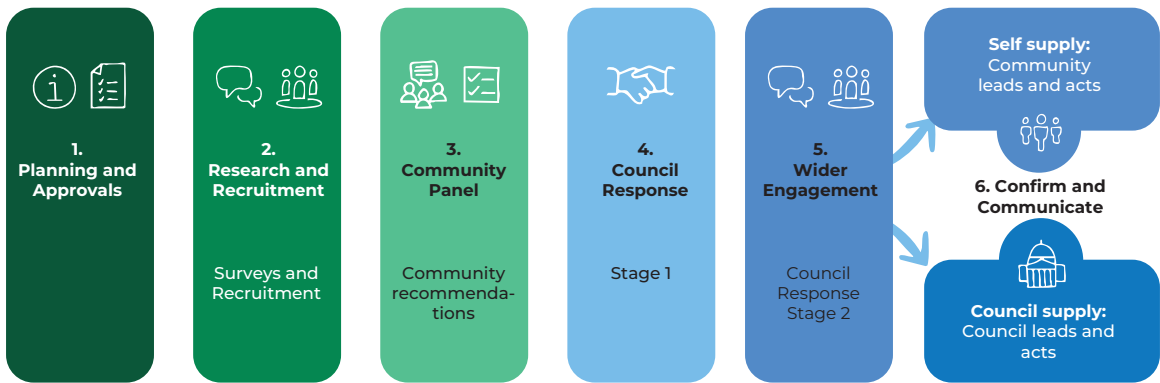
Some options may not be technically, legally, or financially viable. Council will explain clearly what is and isn't possible as the conversation unfolds.



2. Engagement design


2.1 Process Map

The process map sets out the key steps for engaging the Waitoa community on their future water supply. It moves from early planning and community input, through deliberation and Council decision-making, to final implementation. Each phase builds towards a fair, inclusive and trusted outcome.




**Phase 1.
Planning and Approvals**

This phase lays the groundwork for the engagement. It includes defining the purpose, scope, and approach – shaped through co-design with Waitoa residents, Council, Fonterra and Taumata Arowai. The outcomes include this Strategic Engagement Plan with clear foundations for the process, as well as other supporting engagement documentation (i.e. reports, background information), collateral and strategies.



**Phase 2.
Research and Recruitment**

This step focuses on informing the community about how the Community Panel will work and inviting people to get involved.

We'll hear directly from the community about what matters most to them via surveys to capture a broad range of views: one for Waitoa residents and possibly one for the wider Matamata-Piako District.

The surveys will help us understand community priorities, concerns, and values. The results will be used to shape the information that goes into the Community Panel process and help ensure the Panel's work reflects the voices of the Waitoa and wider community.


25 people will be selected to form a representative mini-public of the Waitoa community. Recruitment will be based on local diversity of the community, and making sure that there is a balance of viewpoints. Panel members will be chosen through a transparent and inclusive process, using random selection to ensure fairness and representation.



**Phase 3. Waitoa
Community Panel**

Over several sessions, an independently facilitated Community Panel will explore the different water supply options, weigh up the trade-offs, and consider what's most important to the community.

At the end of the process, the Panel will write recommendations for the preferred water supply and the rationale behind their preferences, and present them to Council.



**Phase 4. Council
response (Stage 1)**

The Council will consider the Community Panel recommendations and make a decision about the future of Waitoa water supply. Council will respond to the community recommendations publicly.



**Phase 5. Wider
engagement**

If Council supply is the preferred option agreed by the Waitoa community and Council, the project that is included in the 26/27 draft Annual Plan, and consulted on if required.

Self supply:
Community
leads and acts



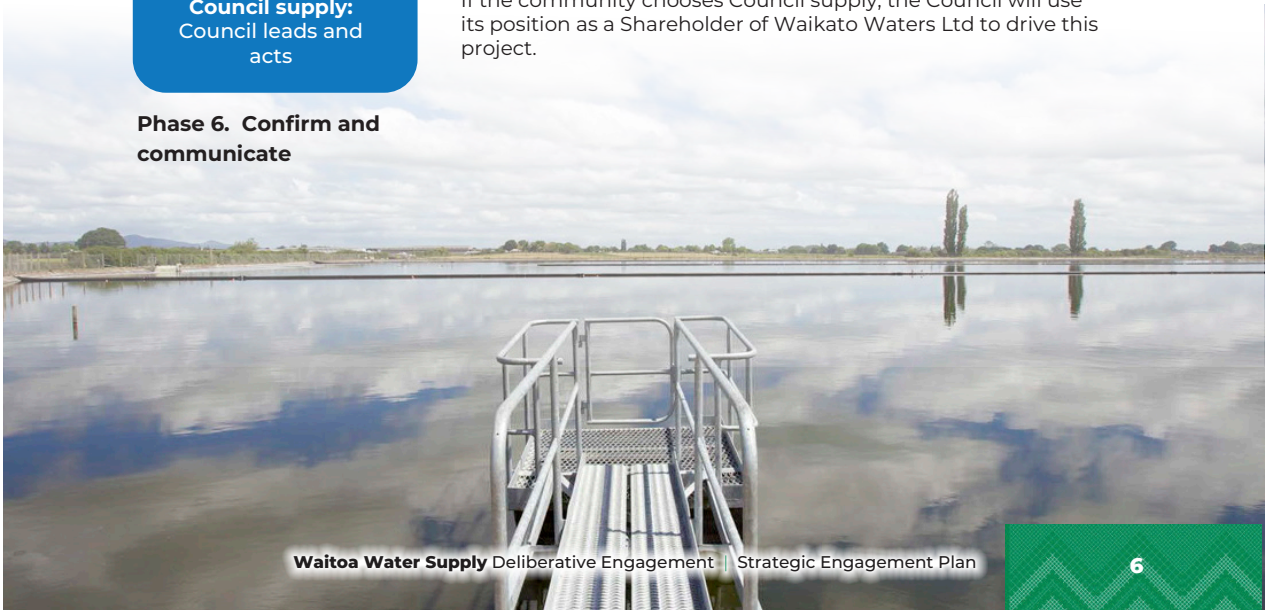
If the community chooses self-supply, residents will take the lead in putting local or shared water supply systems in place.

Council supply:
Council leads and
acts



If the community chooses Council supply, the Council will use its position as a Shareholder of Waikato Waters Ltd to drive this project.

**Phase 6. Confirm and
communicate**



2.2 Level of Community Influence and Council Promises

Phase	Actions	Level of influence (IAP2)	Promises Council promises to:
Phase 2. Research and recruitment	Communicate the engagement opportunity and process Survey(s)	Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Communicate the details of the engagement ◆ Listen to community voices. ◆ Document and record all results. ◆ Provide opportunities for a broad range of community voices. ◆ Provide feedback on how concerns and aspirations influenced the decision.
Phase 3. Waitoa Community Panel	Community Panel	Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Listen to community voices. ◆ Document and record all inputs. ◆ Ensure access to clear and reliable information on relevant critical issues. ◆ Provide opportunities for a broad range of community participation and representation. ◆ Support inclusive, respectful, and well-informed deliberation.
Phase 4. Council response (Stage 1)	Council decides on the future water supply recommendations Response to Waitoa community	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consider the Community Panel's recommendations on the preferred water supply option. ◆ Provide a clear response to the community, including the reasons for its decision. ◆ Publicly share how the Panel recommendations are being taken forward. ◆ Clearly explain any legal, financial or operational factors affecting the recommendations. ◆ Be transparent about next steps, timelines and responsibilities. ◆ Report back to the community on what will happen and when.
Phase 5. Wider engagement Council response (Stage 2)	Council makes future water supply decision Response to community	Consult	<p>If town supply is preferred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Include in 26/27 draft Annual Plan, for district-wide consultation if required. ◆ Report back to the community on what will happen and when.
Phase 6. Confirm and communicate	Implement water self-management	Empower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Be transparent about what support is available (advice, technical, financial, logistical). ◆ Finalise arrangement with Fonterra.
Phase 6. Confirm and communicate	Drive Council/ Waikato Waters Ltd managed water integration	Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Drive the project in our capacity as a Shareholder of Waikato Waters Ltd. ◆ Ensure community concerns, aspirations and solutions are directly reflected in the strategies, policies and actions developed, to the maximum extent possible. ◆ If we can't incorporate relevant Panel recommendations, clearly explain why. ◆ Keep the community informed on progress and milestones.

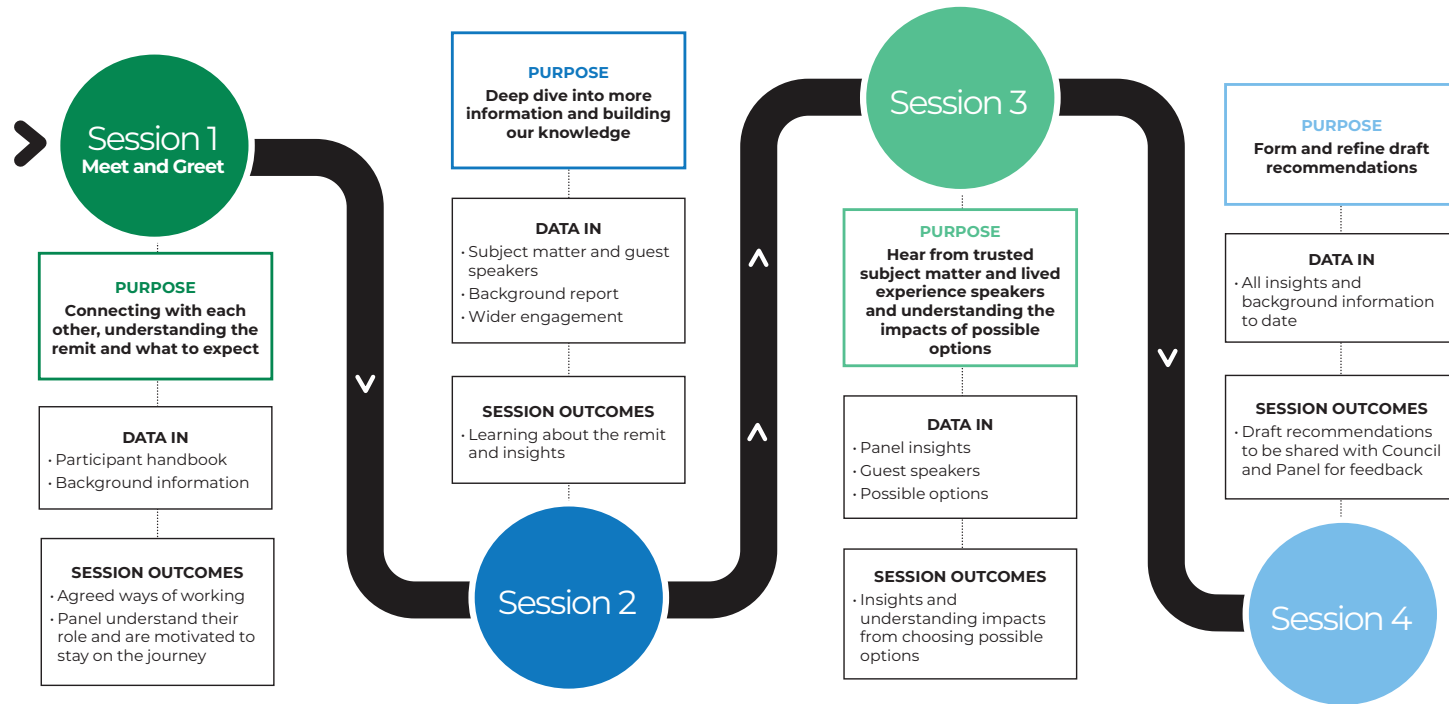
2.3 Engagement Roadmap

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5	PHASE 6
PLANNING & APPROVALS	RESEARCH & RECRUITMENT	COMMUNITY PANEL	COUNCIL RESPONSE (CR) - CR Stage 1 -	WIDER ENGAGEMENT - CR Stage 2 -	CONFIRM & COMMUNICATE
May – Aug 2025	Sept – Oct 2025	Oct – Dec 2025	Feb/Mar 2026	Mar - June 2026	2026/2027 at the earliest
PURPOSE					
To be prepared and ready for the engagement	To gather broad community perspectives and prepare for the Community Panel	To engage deeply and deliberate on the preferred water options for the Waitoa community	To make an initial decision on the future water supply	To make a final decision following wider community input, if town supply is preferred	To signal the way forward and engage with the relevant parties
ACTIVITIES					
Codesign Workshops Develop Strategic Engagement Plan Approval of the engagement plan Develop recruitment plan and communications plan	Waitoa survey District survey tbc EOI for selection Panel recruitment	Community Panel	Council meets to consider the Panel's recommendations Formal response is prepared	Include in the 25/26 draft Annual Plan consultation process	Information sessions Finalise arrangement with Fonterra (self supply) OR Champion the project with Waikato Waters Ltd in our capacity as a shareholder (town supply)
INPUTS					
Project brief	Strategic Engagement Plan Conversation kit	Survey results Background Information Document Speakers	Panel recommendations	District-wide community submissions	Council's decision
OUTPUTS					
Strategic Engagement Plan Conversation Kit	Survey Results Selected panel Background Information Document Speakers	Panel Recommendations	Council formal response - Stage 1	Council's formal response - Stage 2	Community update and stakeholder discussions on next steps
PEOPLE INVOLVED					
Waitoa community Councillors MPDC Fonterra Taumata Arowai	Waitoa community District community MPDC	Waitoa community MPDC	Waitoa community MPDC	Waitoa community District community Councillors MPDC	Waitoa community Councillors, MPDC Fonterra Taumata Arowai Waikato Waters Ltd

2.4 Community Panel Journey

It is recommended that the panel meets for 4.5 days and follow the process outlined below.

The journey of the Community Panel and the work they will do.



3. Preparing for a Community Panel

3.1 What is a Community Panel?

A community panel is a name for a deliberative forum. These processes work on the premise that people can deliver smart, long-term decisions which earn public trust if they are given enough information, time to weigh up the pros and cons, and opportunity to consider the trade-offs associated with an issue.

Deliberation is built around ten core principles which are listed below.

INFLUENTIAL



Deliberation requires decision makers to give weight to and implement the outcomes to the greatest extent possible. This forms a foundation for building trust with your community.

Deliberation isn't about asking people their opinion and then disregarding their views, which significantly reduces trust and results in poorly supported outcomes.

DELIBERATIVE



Deliberation goes beyond conversation and dialogue.

It requires those deliberating to weigh up options and come to judgement on a problem.

Deliberation isn't about people giving you a wish list or a list of ideas. It results in clear direction for organisation decision makers.

REPRESENTATIVE



Deliberation requires that the deliberating group is representative of the whole community. The group is usually selected using an independently conducted, random, stratified process.

Deliberation isn't about allowing anyone to turn up and people to 'self-select', like the participants at a public meeting. It allows you as decision makers to have a high level of comfort, because you know what everyday people who are broadly representative of your customers or community think is reasonable (once they are informed). This is more valuable than knowing only what interest groups and highly articulate and invested people are lobbying for.

INFORMATIVE



Deliberation requires that people have detailed, in-depth, and balanced information before they come to judgement.

This includes hearing different perspectives, including the views of experts and interest groups.

Deliberation isn't about asking people for uninformed views. It allows you as organisation decision makers to know that the recommendations being provided to you are based on evidence and have considered all sides of the issue.

TIME



Deliberation requires that the deliberating group is given sufficient time to become informed about the issues, weigh up options and come to judgement. Long form processes are usually 4-6 full days. An online (equivalent) process or a short process can be held over 2-3 days, if you are scaling down.

Deliberation isn't about holding a short workshop or evening meeting.

BLANK PAGE REPORT



Deliberation requires that participants respond to the remit by writing their own report. Starting with a blank page, they refine and agree on their final recommendations, then present their report directly to decision makers for consideration.

Deliberation isn't about providing options or a draft report. The organisation doesn't gather feedback on their own ideas. Instead, the organisation hears directly from their customers or community without any interpretation from consultants or staff.

TRANSPARENT



Deliberation is a public process that seeks to build trust in democratic decision making and as such all aspects should be made public, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Members of the public should be able to observe the deliberating group in action and the report of the group should be made public immediately after it is handed to the key decision maker. All information considered by the group should be considered public and be on the project website. Communication activities such as sharing videos of the process and interviews with participants can also help to increase transparency.

Deliberation isn't about working behind closed doors. It allows the public to see that it has been a fair process.

CLEAR REMIT



Deliberation is about the deliberating group responding to a remit - or primary question - that goes to the core of the issue, shares the dilemma, and promotes open discussion. The remit question is clear and written in plain English.

Deliberation isn't about responding to easy issues. It allows the organisation to receive solutions to complex problems.

INDEPENDENT FACILITATION



Deliberation is designed and facilitated by independent, professional facilitators with experience in deliberation. Facilitation enables individuals to work through a designed set of activities (conversations) to collectively and productively produce an outcome (recommendations). Facilitators ensure that all group members are given equal opportunity to participate.

Deliberation isn't about the group being led to a pre-determined result.

INCLUSIVE



Deliberation requires that barriers to participation are removed so that anyone feels they could participate in a deliberation. Some barriers are easily managed, for example, paying people an honorarium to cover the costs of their participation (travel, childcare etc). Also, support can be provided to people living with disabilities and meetings can be held in accessible venues. Other barriers, such as people not having the time or considering that this is, (ie. 'not for them') are harder to remove.

Deliberation isn't about excluding people and it ensures that the organisation hears from a true cross-section of its community.

3.2 Recruitment Approach

Recruiting a representative Community Panel is a critical step in ensuring the legitimacy, inclusiveness, and community ownership of the water supply decision in Waitoa. MosaicLab recommends a random stratified method, which is suitable for the following circumstances:

- ◆ You are running a process that involves multiple sessions that involve weighing up differing views.
- ◆ Many different views or agendas are involved, and you want a balanced conversation.
- ◆ You want to hear from people who don't usually participate in traditional consultation.
- ◆ Public trust is low, and you need a transparent and fair approach.
- ◆ You need to build legitimacy for the decision-making process and its outcomes.
- ◆ You want participants to build shared understanding through discussion and reflection.

Given the small size of the community and an even smaller number of affected properties (~130 properties), MosaicLab recommends the following tailored recruitment strategy.

Recruitment Activities

1. Invitation and Expression of Interest (EOI)

Every household in Waitoa to receive a formal invitation to take part in the panel process.

Materials that explain the issue, the role of the panel, and how to register interest via an online or paper-based EOI form.

Community-wide communications that include direct mail, local posters, word of mouth and online sharing.

2. Community Launch and Selection

A community meeting to be held approx. 4 weeks after Invitation and EOI goes out.

Purpose: to explain the project in more depth, answer questions, and build trust in the process.

A celebratory, welcoming environment with food and informal conversation.

Public sortition may be conducted in the room to demonstrate fairness and transparency in how people are selected to be on the Panel.

